

WASHINGTON DC – The U.S. Department of Education's Equity and Excellence Commission will host a town hall meeting this Thursday, April 21, 2011, from 6:00-8:00 pm, at City Hall in San Jose, CA, to examine disparities in educational opportunities for students. US Congressman Mike Honda first proposed this commission in Congress over two years ago to examine how education finance can be reformed to achieve education equity. Among those scheduled to participate are U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, Russlynn Ali, US Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for the Office for Civil Rights, and Alberto Retana, Director of Community Outreach for the U.S. Department of Education. Roughly 250 parents, educators and community leaders are expected to attend and participate in this discussion.

**“The US lags badly behind most of the developed world in reading, math and science scores. As poverty increases in our schools, our scores steadily decrease, stunting our students’ potential and undermining our country’s competitiveness,” said Rep Honda. “The Equity Commission represents an opportunity to address our broken system of education finance and develop a plan for comprehensive school finance reform that is focused on high achievement for all students. The Commission also represents an important step in the fight to obtain educational equity, not parity, for each child. We have known for years that equal opportunity is a fallacy in our public schools and I am dedicated to proposing and passing legislation based on recommendations of the Commission. I have no doubt that through this public dialogue we can transform the education system to better serve the learning needs of each child. Our children deserve nothing less.”**

The Equity and Excellence Commission will obtain broad public input to examine disparities that give rise to the achievement gap, with a focus on systems of finance, and recommend ways in which federal policies could address such disparities. The Commission will also make recommendations for restructuring federal school finance systems to achieve equity in the distribution of educational resources and further student performance, especially for the students at the lower end of the achievement gap. The Equity Commission is comprised of 28 members from a range of backgrounds, including education, law, tax, government, business, and civil rights. The Commission also has seven ex-officio members representing the Department of Education and the White House.

The Equity Commission co-chairs are Chris Edley, UC Berkeley Law School Professor and Presidential Advisor, and Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix and former President of the California State Board of Education. The Commission also includes California's own Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar, Eric Hanushek and Thomas Saenz, and includes renowned education leaders like Linda Darling-Hammond, former education adviser to President Obama.

**WHO:**

U.S. Rep. Mike Honda

Russlynn Ali, Assistant Secretary for the Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education  
Alberto Retana, Director of Community Outreach for the U.S. Department of Education

**WHAT:**

Town Hall Meeting hosted by the U.S. Department of Education's Equity and Excellence Commission to examine the disparities in meaningful educational opportunities.

**WHERE:**

San Jose City Hall  
200 E. Santa Clara St.  
San Jose, California

**WHEN:**

6:00-8:00 p.m.  
Thursday, April 21, 2011

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